United Nations S/2007/376

Security Council

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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic and the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the request of the Security Council contained in the statement issued by its President on 26 September 2001 (S/PRST/2001/25), in which the Council requested me to continue to keep it regularly informed of the situation in the Central African Republic and the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in that country (BONUCA). The report covers the period from January to June 2007 and describes the situation in its political, socio-economic, humanitarian, security and human rights aspects.

II. Political situation

2. Since my last report, dated 28 December 2006 (S/2006/1034), the political situation has been marked by preparations for an inclusive political dialogue necessitated by a persistent political crisis and rebel activities, especially in the north-western and north-eastern parts of the country. In order to find lasting solutions to the crisis, a number of activities were carried out by various national and international actors.

3. Most notably, the Panel of the Wise, a prominent civil society group, conducted a series of consultations with national political parties, trade unions, civil society organizations and members of the diplomatic community accredited in the country. Most of the stakeholders stressed the need to hold an inclusive political dialogue involving a broad segment of the country's society, as well as the rebel movements that have recently resorted to armed activities against the Government.

4. Subsequently, the Panel of the Wise, having been mandated by President François Bozizé also to consult rebel groups, met with some rebel leaders abroad. It also met with former President Ange-Félix Patassé, who lives in exile since having been overthrown by President Bozizé in March 2003. In March 2007, the Panel presented to President Bozizé its report containing recommendations on holding an inclusive political dialogue. President Bozizé forwarded the report to the National Assembly and the Constitutional Court to seek their views on the document. The

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report was also circulated to the diplomatic community in the capital, Bangui, and to political parties and members of civil society. As at 11 June, only political parties had commented on the document, while the Constitutional Court and the National Assembly had provided no formal feedback.

5. Among its main conclusions and recommendations, the Panel of the Wise proposed to hold the national dialogue in three stages: (a) preliminary consultations focusing on military and security aspects; (b) preliminary consultations among representatives of all the political parties and civil society organizations to define the content and procedures of the eventual inclusive national dialogue; and (c) an inclusive political conference bringing together all stakeholders and facilitated by an external mediator.

6. With regard to the military dialogue, a number of meetings aimed at reaching a ceasefire throughout the country were held with rebel movements. In that context, the signature of the Syrte agreement on 2 February 2007 between the Government of the Central African Republic and Abdoulaye Miskine, leader of the Front démocratique pour le peuple centrafricain (FDPC), and the signature of the Birao agreement between the Government and Zakaria Damane, chief of operations of the Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement (UFDR), constitute important preliminary steps in the dialogue process. The Government is trying to reach similar peace agreements with other rebel leaders.

7. President Bozizé continues to express his support for the holding of the inclusive political dialogue, on condition that the security situation in the country improve and that the dialogue not call into question the legitimacy of institutions set up following the legislative and presidential elections in 2005.

8. Meanwhile, leaders of opposition parties who are members of the Union des forces vives de la nation (UFVN) remain doubtful of the Government's commitment to hold the dialogue. They view the signature of the Syrte and Birao agreements with rebel groups as a dilatory manoeuvre resorted to by President Bozizé to either bypass the dialogue or postpone it as long as possible. Those leaders have denounced the delay in proceeding with the organization of the dialogue and demanded that the authorities agree to a clear plan and timeline for the conference.

9. On 18 May 2007, President Bozizé held a meeting with UFVN representatives, during which he reaffirmed his determination to hold the dialogue conference. He explained that he intended to reach preliminary agreements on the cessation of hostilities in all parts of the country before proceeding with the organization of such a dialogue. The President's arguments for delaying the dialogue have continued to be met with scepticism by opposition parties as a whole.

10. During the reporting period, BONUCA organized a number of training programmes in cooperation with national authorities, aimed primarily at revitalizing civic processes in the country. From 8 to 17 March 2007, the Office conducted training for traditional and community leaders and civil society groups to explore ways to resolve and mediate conflicts through dialogue in the town of Markounda, in Ouham prefecture.

11. In my report dated 23 February 2007 (S/2007/97), I recommended the deployment of a United Nations multidimensional presence along the borders of Chad and the Central African Republic with the Sudan to prevent further spillover of the Darfur crisis. Although the Chadian Government agreed in principle to a

deployment, it expressed a clear preference for further discussion of my proposals. On that basis I dispatched a delegation to Chad and the Central African Republic on 21 May for discussions with both Governments on the proposed United Nations operation. I will be submitting a report on the results of the delegation's visit in the coming weeks.

III. Military and security situation

12. The security situation has become more volatile as a result of the increased activities of highway bandits and rebel movements in various parts of the country. Bangui continued to suffer from frequent, almost daily residential break-ins.

13. As had occurred in October 2006, the UFDR rebel movement captured two towns in the north-eastern part of the country on 3 and 4 March 2007. The two towns were immediately recaptured by Government forces, supported by the Multinational Force of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community and French forces. Following the signature of the Birao ceasefire agreement between Government and rebel forces on 13 April 2007, relative calm was observed in the area. That calm was disrupted in May by the arrival in the town of Sam Ouandja of approximately 3,000 Sudanese nationals who sought refuge there after fleeing what they described as heavy fighting in the Darfur region of the Sudan.

14. In the north-western part of the country, the security situation has significantly deteriorated. New armed attacks by rebel fighters belonging to the Armée populaire pour la restauration de la démocratie (APRD) and by criminal gangs continue to be reported. On 19 May 2007, highway robbers held hostage two humanitarian workers from Caritas and Cooperazione Internazionale. On 26 May, an unidentified armed group attacked a BONUCA convoy that was returning from a mission in the town of Bambari. On 11 June, a French humanitarian worker of the Médecins sans frontières humanitarian agency was killed by members of the APRD rebel movement, who stated that their attack had occurred mistakenly and unintentionally. My Special Representative and the United Nations Resident Coordinator in the Central African Republic have strongly condemned those attacks and have requested the Government to reinforce the security of humanitarian workers and all United Nations staff in the Central African Republic, who provide much-needed assistance to the people in the country.

15. It should be noted that retaliatory actions by Government forces are often disproportionate in the areas where rebels and other armed groups conduct their activities. Assuming that the local civilian population supports rebels, Government forces have sometimes resorted to destroying, torching and pillaging houses and committing physical violence against innocent civilians. The combination of acts of violence perpetrated by rebels, bandits and Government forces frequently leads to the displacement of the civilian communities, and civilians then seek refuge either in the bush and the fields or in neighbouring Cameroon and Chad. As a result, the humanitarian situation in the country has significantly deteriorated, with nearly a quarter of the entire population of about 4 million said to be affected.

16. The security situation is also compounded by other forms of violence, including inter-communal violence, which often translates into fighting between cattle-raisers and farmers or fighting for religious reasons. Furthermore, the porosity of the international borders of the Central African Republic facilitates transboundary

criminality, the proliferation of illicit light weapons and incursions by armed groups. The situation is exacerbated by the ongoing conflicts in Darfur and eastern Chad.

17. BONUCA and the Government of France continue to support the programme of restructuring the country's armed forces. During the reporting period, BONUCA, in cooperation with France, trained a number of army, gendarmerie and police officers on the role of the national defence and security services in a modern, democratic society. The project on the reintegration of ex-combatants and support for communities, implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), under the auspices of the national commission set up to fight against the proliferation of light weapons and to promote disarmament and reintegration, was completed in February 2007. The project has succeeded in demobilizing 7,556 ex-combatants and implementing up to 50 communal microprojects to help them reintegrate into peaceful civilian life.

18. Given the gravity of the threat posed by the continuing proliferation of small arms and light weapons, two new projects to support communities in controlling and reducing the circulation of such weapons were recently launched. Developed with the support of the Governments of France and Japan, the projects would require funding of up to $2 million each. A coordination group on security sector reform has also been launched and a national workshop on security sector reform is tentatively scheduled for September 2007.

IV. Socio-economic and financial situation

19. The economy of the Central African Republic has seen relative improvement in 2007, compared to previous years. The growth rate in 2007 has reached 4.7 per cent, compared to 3.8 per cent in 2006. The current economic growth results from the revitalization of the tertiary and secondary sectors and increased investment in infrastructure. If this encouraging trend continues, the decline in per capital income observed in the country since the 1980s could be significantly reversed. The continuing increase in inflation, due in large part to rising oil prices, could, however, dampen the recent growth rate.

20. Public finances also improved, with the launch, in December 2006, of reforms in financial control mechanisms within the framework of the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Development Policy Operation facility of the World Bank. The State's revenues decreased in the first trimester of 2007, reaching only 90 per cent of the projected figures. The overall revenue estimates for 2007 currently amount to 85 billion CFA francs, compared to 73 billion in 2006. Nevertheless, in the area of public expenditures, the country has continued to face difficulties in respecting the planned limits on expenditures, as was observed by the IMF mission in May 2007. The Government is also confronted with persistent difficulties in meeting its basic financial obligations, such as paying salaries, financing its basic functions and investing in the vital mining sector.

21. By the end of 2006, international financial assistance received by the Central African Republic considerably exceeded that of previous years, reaching 73 billion CFA francs. However, most of the aid was used to cover the country's international debt-servicing arrears in order to renew cooperation with international financial

institutions. The renewal of such cooperation could increase the volume of international aid in 2007. In that context, the European Union supported the country's efforts to pay its internal arrears and rehabilitate public finances. The European Union also intends to support territorial administration reform through the creation of local economic centres in order to decentralize the economy.

22. The planned organization of round-table consultations between the authorities of the Central African Republic and international donors in 2007 could result in the cancellation of the county's external debts and attract additional resources for financing national reconstruction efforts. It is also expected that the country's overall financial prospects could brighten even further with future debt relief, should the country be deemed eligible to benefit from the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.

V. Humanitarian situation and operational activities for development

23. The overall humanitarian conditions have substantially deteriorated since the beginning of the year because of increasing insecurity, mostly in the northern parts of the country. With an estimated 1 million nationals affected by the conflict, the number of internally displaced persons requiring emergency assistance is said to have reached over 200,000. The local mechanism for rapid funding of humanitarian needs, the Emergency Response Fund, has received contributions of approximately $2 million from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Sweden. The United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund has also allocated $4 million for 2007.

24. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) intensified its activities for the protection of internally displaced persons by distributing emergency supplies and by training defence and security forces on principles of internal displacement, respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. UNHCR also completed the voluntary repatriation of 9,692 refugees from Southern Sudan and intends to start repatriating 875 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

25. In terms of overall operational development activities, various entities of the United Nations system started the implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the period 2007-2011. Their activities are concentrated in three major areas: (a) reinforcement of democratic governance and respect for human rights; (b) post-conflict revival and fighting against poverty; and (c) fighting against the spread of HIV/AIDS.

26. The World Food Programme (WFP) has distributed 5,737 metric tons of food supplies in the northern parts of the country affected by violence. It has continued to operate school feeding programmes for 100,000 children in six prefectures and has provided food supplies for 34,000 individuals affected by HIV/AIDS and another 80,000 individuals affected by the ongoing conflict. WFP has also made its aircraft and 10 trucks available for humanitarian workers from other aid organizations to facilitate their access to remote areas of the country. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has distributed seeds and agricultural tools to 44,000 families, comprising up to 220,000 individuals, in northern parts of the

country. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) concluded a $13.5 million plan of action with the Government for the period 2007-2011.

27. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have organized joint vaccination and anti-malaria campaigns for 96,989 children up to five years of age and 6,765 pregnant women in six provinces affected by conflict. During the campaign, WHO and UNICEF also vaccinated 525 infants up to one year of age against measles. WHO has further assisted the Government in organizing a vaccination campaign against yellow fever and in mapping health services provision in the country.

28. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization continued its activities in the areas of reconstruction of the country's education system, promotion of women's literacy, civic and peace education, culture of communication, prevention of HIV/AIDS in academic circles, protection of the cultural identity of disadvantaged ethnic communities and facilitation of their access to primary education.

29. With financial and technical assistance from WHO and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNHCR has carried out an HIV/AIDS sensitization and voluntary detection campaign among refugees, with a view to providing care to affected refugees. In March 2007, the results of the first national HIV survey, carried out with the assistance of UNFPA, were published. On the basis of the results, the United Nations country team intends to develop, with the assistance of UNAIDS, a country action plan.

VI. Human rights situation

30. The human rights situation has significantly deteriorated over the past six months, both in the capital and in the countryside, in particular in the provinces of Ouham, Ouham-Pendé, Vakaga and Nana-Grébizi.

31. In February 2007, during a police operation to capture suspects who allegedly disobeyed a Government decree targeting mostly Muslim shop owners in one of the densely populated quarters of Bangui, four people died and a number of residents were injured. The police reaction was condemned not only by national non-governmental organizations but also by the Minister of Interior, who initiated an investigation.

32. In the countryside, grave human rights violations are generally attributed to the prevailing climate of insecurity. Violations are often committed by highway robbers, rebel forces and the national armed forces. After rebel attacks, national security forces frequently carry out reprisal actions, during which indiscriminate acts of mistreatment of the local civilian population occur.

33. Despite the Government's ratification of international legal instruments protecting human and humanitarian rights, gross violations of those rights continue to be reported in the country, even though BONUCA has often drawn the attention of the authorities to their obligations under those international instruments.

34. During the reporting period, BONUCA participated in the assessment missions carried out by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations country team in different parts of the country.

BONUCA also assisted the Government in drafting the country's labour code, carried out sensitization activities through mass media and organized training sessions on human rights for law enforcement agents in the town of Bambari, in Ouaka province.

35. In partnership with national and international non-governmental organizations, UNICEF set up local and regional networks for the protection of children, as well as for monitoring and reporting cases of human rights violations in Ouham and Nana-Grébizi prefectures. At the same time, programmes for disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation of child soldiers, provided for under the peace agreement signed between the Government and the UFDR rebel group, have also been initiated. Up to 400 child soldiers have already been identified to benefit from the programmes. UNDP has started the implementation of a project on legal security, financed by the Government of France. In the social and cultural fields, the first Bangui International Human Rights Film Festival, sponsored by the European Union, UNDP and the International Organization of la Francophonie, was held from 18 to 23 May 2007.

VII. Observations

36. The overall political, security and socio-economic situation in the Central African Republic remains precarious. The volatile climate is aggravated by repeated violations of human rights and deteriorating humanitarian conditions. The causes of the ongoing crisis lie in four intertwined areas: (a) the absence of a culture of dialogue and tolerance; (b) repeated human rights violations; (c) impunity; and (d) an unfavourable social environment caused by widespread poverty, corruption, irregular salary payments and an accumulation of salary arrears.

37. I strongly encourage the authorities of the Central African Republic to intensify their efforts to move the peace process forward by organizing without further delay an inclusive political dialogue. The United Nations stands ready to support the process. While I welcome recent peace agreements signed by the Government and a number of armed rebel groups, I remain convinced that only through a comprehensive and inclusive dialogue can solid progress towards restoring sustainable stability in the country and attracting investors be made.

38. I strongly condemn the repeated attacks on humanitarian workers, including staff members of the United Nations system, in the Central African Republic. I call on the Government to take the necessary measures to bring those responsible for perpetrating such incidents to justice and to ensure adequate protection for staff who provide essential relief assistance to the people of the Central African Republic, often under extremely challenging conditions.

39. I also welcome the decision of the Heads of State of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community to extend the mandate of its Multinational Force in the Central African Republic (FOMUC) for an additional six-month period, until 31 December 2007. I again commend the African Union and the European Union for their important political and financial support for FOMUC, and appeal to them and to the international community as a whole for continued and increased support to enable FOMUC to expand its security assistance projects throughout the country.

40. Recent encouraging prospects can be sustained only with continued international cooperation, in a climate of peace. The United Nations community will continue to support the Government and the people of the Central African Republic for the achievement of lasting peace and to mobilize international aid. However, the primary responsibility for improving conditions in the country rests with the Government and the people as a whole.

41. In conclusion, I would like to express gratitude to regional States and organizations, as well as other States and institutions, for their continued support for the Government of the Central African Republic, especially in the financial and security sectors. I would also like to commend my Special Representative in the Central African Republic, General Lamine Cissé, his staff, and other members of the United Nations country team as a whole, for their professionalism and dedication in fulfilling their vital duties, often, in dangerous conditions.

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General Assembly
Sixty-first session
Agenda item 9
Question of Cyprus

Security Council
Sixty-second year

Letter dated 22 June 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with the instructions received from my Government, I have the honour to refer to your report of 4 June 2007 on the United Nations operation in Cyprus (S/2007/328) and, in particular, to paragraph 28 thereof, concerning the ongoing demolition of Greek Cypriot houses by the Turkish occupation forces in the occupied town of Rizokarpaso without the owners' consent.

While my Government expresses its appreciation for the commendable efforts of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus towards the Turkish side for stopping this illegal practice, we regret to inform you that 80 houses have been demolished so far (see annex) and many others have been paint-marked by the Turkish forces for oncoming demolition. According to information in the Turkish Cypriot press, after the houses of the Greek Cypriots are demolished, the plots of land are offered to settlers from mainland Turkey, in addition to financial assistance for the construction of new houses.

The Government of the Republic of Cyprus strongly protests these developments, which constitute a blatant violation of international humanitarian law and the law of armed conflict, which both stipulate with clarity the obligations of an occupying power — in this case of the Republic of Turkey — in the field of property rights. Regrettably, this case would constitute, if it is not prevented, a deplorable addition to a series of similar cases, which demonstrate the direct involvement of Turkey in the unlawful exploitation of Greek Cypriot properties in the occupied area of the Republic of Cyprus.

I should be grateful if you would arrange for the present letter and its attachment to be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 19, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Andreas D. **Mavroyiannis**

07-39263 (E) 270607

Annex to the letter dated 22 June 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

List of owners of demolished properties in Rizokarpaso, Cyprus

A. Community of Anavrisis

1. Eleni Xontrou (Velounia)
2. Elli Socratous (Mikelli)
3. Zacharias Liasou
4. Agathagellos Chari
5. Nicolas Charpas
6. Dimitris Fragoudis
7. Crhistodoulos M. Parpottas
8. Liasos Fragoudis
9. Eleni Ttoouli Nasari
10. Michails Pitziorris
11. Crhistodoulos K. Parpottas
12. Eleni Pavlou
13. Yiannis Charpas
14. Nicolas Tsikkirou
15. Charls Agathagelou
16. Andreas Chambi
17. Stella Pitrakkou (Petinou)
18. Christina P. Pitakkou
19. Panayis Michaelou
20. Yiannia Poxamatis
21. Neophytos Poyiadjis
22. Thekla Matheou
23. Yiannis Poxamatis
24. Marla Milous
25. Argyroulla Sotiriou
26. Yiannis Thrasivoulou
27. Nicolas Kliris
28. Maria Charidimou

29. Annezou Michall Metaxa
30. Polyxeni Ttokkallou
31. Savvas Matheou
32. Matheos Poylatzis
33. Despo Kolatsi (Mouzouri)
34. Despo Kolatsi (Mouzouri)
35. Evagelos Kolatsis
36. Pantelis Pitrakkou

B. Community of Leko

1. Eleni I. Loizou
2. Kyriaki Tanti (hereditary)
3. Maroulia Chronia (hereditary)
4. Sotira Kayiatou
5. Lambis Solomou (Falas)
6. Zacharias Ttoulouras
7. Michalis Theofanous
8. Stellos Pallikaros
9. Yiannis Klonaros
10. Athina Kattou (Tarza)
11. Andreas Kyamidis (doctor)
12. Flourentza Pamballi
13. Nicolas or Christakis Velounias
14. Pavlos Korkou
15. Crhistodoulos Xiouri
16. Stella Xiouri
17. Stylianos Maroullous
18. Yiannis Maroullous
19. Stylianos Manitaras (Loukias)
20. Dimitris Charou
21. Maria Lazari
22. Andreas X"Panayi
23. Prodromos Prodromou Giorgos
24. Maria Avrami

C. Community of Ayla Trias

1. Maria Z. Vasili (Giogalli)
2. Zacharias A. Koulias
3. Sofia Ktori
4. Androulla Psara (Ilia)
5. Anastasis Yiannikkou
6. Crhistodoulos Synesi
7. Yiannis Yiannikkou
8. Petros Pafitis
9. Petros Koulias
10. Christofis Koulias
11. Stellos Stylianou
12. Vasilis G. Vasili
13. Andriana Saxli
14. Vasilis Stylianou
15. Sofia Ktori
16. Sofia Koulia
17. Andriana Tatzlarou
18. Savvas N. Pafitis
19. Antonis Flourou
20. Maria P. Lefteri (X"Panayi)

United Nations A/61/966–S/2007/378

General Assembly
Security Council

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General Assembly
Sixty-first session
Agenda item 80
The rule of law at the national and international levels

Security Council
Sixty-second year

Letter dated 21 June 2007 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of the note verbale dated 9 June 2007 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran addressed to the Embassy of Switzerland (Interest Section of the United States of America) in Tehran (see annex) on categorical rejection of the baseless allegations made by Nicholas Burns, the United States Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

I should be grateful if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 80, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) M. Javad **Zarif**

07-39446 (E) 270607

Annex to the letter dated 21 June 2007 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran presents its compliments to the Embassy of Switzerland (Interest Section of the United States of America) and wishes to state the following:

The United States Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Nicholas Burns, has regrettably accused Iran of being implicated in the explosions of the United States marine barrack in Lebanon (1983) and Khobar towers in Saudi Arabia (1996), in an article published in the *Boston Review*, May/June 2007.

Also, in his remarks at the Holocaust Museum's Day of Remembrance Luncheon, held in Washington on 19 April 2007, he asserted the following: "In Argentina, in Buenos Aires, in 1992, we believe the Iranian Government bombed the Israeli Embassy. And then two years later, we believe that the Iranian Government, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps command bombed the Argentine Jewish community center and killed an extraordinary number of people, hundreds of people, in the heart of Buenos Aires."

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, while rejecting and strongly condemning such sheer lies and irresponsible and unfounded allegations aimed at tarnishing the image of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as at undermining its foreign policy and national security, especially its bilateral relations with Argentina, reserves its legal rights under international and established domestic laws to counter these acts, which run contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and other rules and principles of international law. It emphatically expects the Government of the United States to avoid constant and continuous violation of the sovereign rights of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as its national security and international interests and to take urgent measures to redress the past violations.

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General Assembly
Sixty-first session
Agenda items 67 and 68

Promotion and protection of human rights

Report of the Human Rights Council

Security Council
Sixty-second year

Letter dated 22 June 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the declaration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba concerning the Human Rights Council, issued on 19 June 2007 (see annex).

I kindly request that the above-mentioned document be circulated as a document of the United Nations under agenda items 67 (Promotion and protection of human rights) and 68 (Report of the Human Rights Council), as well as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Rodrigo **Malmierca Díaz**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

07-39367 (E) 260607 270607

Annex to the letter dated 22 June 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Spanish]

Declaration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

At the end of its fifth session in Geneva, the Human Rights Council decided to discontinue the mandate of the so-called Personal Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Cuba, thereby putting an end to the attempts of the United States Government to manipulate the issue of human rights in our country.

That decision, taken by the body that has replaced the discredited Commission on Human Rights, represents a historic victory in our country's fight for justice and for an end to the anti-Cuban project conceived by the United States as a pretext for maintaining and intensifying its genocidal policy of embargoes and aggression against Cuba.

With that decision, the Human Rights Council recognizes the unjust, selective and discriminatory nature of the acts that have been committed against our country for two decades, and gives the lie to the resolutions and mechanisms that the North American Government, by means of coercion, threats and blackmail, forced upon the now defunct Commission on Human Rights.

This outcome could not have been achieved without the support of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement and other Third World countries. Even the member States of the European Union, unfailing allies of the United States in the action it took against our country within the framework of the former Commission on Human Rights, had no choice but to agree to discontinue the discredited mandate against Cuba, since that was the only way to lend credibility to the Council, which is now coming to the end of its first year of operation.

This outcome represents an essential act of justice for the valiant and generous Cuban nation, whose sons and daughters contributed to the eradication of colonialism and apartheid in Africa and are now working quietly and selflessly to ensure that millions of people in more than 100 countries can enjoy their human rights. Over 42,000 Cuban doctors, nurses, teachers, sports coaches, engineers and technicians are showing their solidarity in the pursuit of that goal. It represents an act of justice for a nation whose universities are currently educating, free of charge, over 30,000 young people from 118 countries and which has restored the sight of almost 700,000 individuals from 31 countries.

It represents recognition of the worth and the efforts of Cuba and its Revolution; the contribution of the latter to the promotion and protection of the human rights of all citizens and to the creation of an increasingly just, egalitarian and humane society cannot be overlooked or distorted.

It is a well-deserved recognition of Cuba's efforts to defend the interests of the Third World and to condemn and resist the attempts of the United States to achieve imperial domination. A recognition of Cuba, which, on its merits and in spite of the pressure brought to bear by the Government of the United States and the European

Union, which worked actively to undermine its candidacy, was elected as an original member of the Human Rights Council, obtaining 135 votes — more than two thirds of the membership of the United Nations General Assembly.

In spite of the Council's ongoing deficiencies and shortcomings, the outcome of the recently concluded institution-building process will benefit the Third World countries, which have come together under the banner of the Non-Aligned Movement, currently chaired by Cuba. The Movement played an active role in that process, ensuring that issues of particular importance to Southern countries, such as the situation of human rights in Palestine and the occupied Arab territories, the right to development, and racial discrimination and xenophobia were included in the Council's agenda.

It now remains to be seen whether the industrialized countries, which used the former Commission on Human Rights as a vehicle for the imposition of their ideas and political vision, are really willing to work on the basis of the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity, non-selectivity, constructive dialogue and cooperation and to avoid the double standards and politicization that resulted in the discrediting of the now defunct Commission on Human Rights, which became an inquisitional tribunal designed to try the Southern countries.

In its capacity as chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, Cuba has played an important role in the aforementioned process, and it will continue to fight to defend truth, its own sovereignty and the interests of the Third World countries.

Havana, 19 June 2007

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Security Council

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General Assembly
Sixty-first session
Agenda item 13
The situation in the Middle East

Security Council
Sixty-second year

Identical letters dated 25 June 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On the instructions of my Government, I transmit to you herewith a statistical summary of Israeli violations from 16 to 21 June 2007 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 13, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Caroline **Ziade**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

07-39412 (E) 260607 260607

Annex to the identical letters dated 25 June 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Subject: Israeli violations, acts of aggression and activities from 16 to 21 June 2007, inclusive

Air violations

On 17 June 2007, between 1010 hours and 1330 hours, an enemy Israeli reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over `Alma al-Sha`b and circled between Beirut and the South. It then departed Lebanese airspace over al-Naqurah.

Between 1944 hours and 2330 hours, an enemy Israeli reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over the sea off al-Bayadah and circled over the South. It then departed Lebanese airspace over Rumaysh.

Between 2145 hours and 2150 hours, enemy Israeli military aircraft overflew the Ramiya area.

On 18 June 2007, between 0001 hours and 0500 hours, an enemy Israeli reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over `Alma al-Sha`b and circled over the South. It then departed Lebanese airspace over `Alma al-Sha`b.

Between 1640 hours and 1820 hours, an enemy Israeli reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over the sea off Tyre and circled over the South, Beirut and Jubayl. It then departed Lebanese airspace over the sea off al-Naqurah.

Between 2130 hours and 2250 hours, an enemy Israeli reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over the sea off al-Naqurah and circled over the South and al-Na`imah. It then departed Lebanese airspace over al-Naqurah.

Between 2130 hours and 2300 hours, an enemy Israeli reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over al-Naqurah in a northerly direction and circled over the South. It then departed Lebanese airspace over `Alma al-Sha`b.

On the same date at 2350 hours, an enemy Israeli reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over Rumaysh and circled over regions of the South. It then departed Lebanese airspace on 19 June 2007 at 0215 hours over Rumaysh.

On 19 June 2007, between 0239 hours and 0350 hours, an enemy Israeli reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over Rumaysh and circled over the South. It then departed Lebanese airspace over Rumaysh.

On the same date between 0817 hours and 1300 hours, an enemy Israeli reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over Kafr Kila and circled over Rayaq and Baalbek. It then departed Lebanese airspace over al-Naqurah.

On 20 June 2007, between 0949 hours and 1120 hours, two enemy Israeli military aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over Rumaysh and circled over the South, Beirut and Shikka. They then departed Lebanese airspace over `Alma al-Sha`b.

Between 1005 hours and 1120 hours, two enemy Israeli military aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over Rumaysh and circled over all regions of Lebanon. They then departed Lebanese airspace over `Alma al-Sha`b.

Between 1119 hours and 1510 hours, an enemy Israeli reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over the sea off Tyre and circled over regions of the South, Beirut and Jubayl. It then departed Lebanese airspace over Rumaysh.

Between 1500 hours and 1615 hours, two enemy Israeli military aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over Deir Mimas and circled over all regions of Lebanon. They then departed Lebanese airspace over `Alma al-Sha`b.

Between 1623 hours and 1630 hours, two enemy Israeli military aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over Kafr Kila as far as Marj`ayun. They then departed Lebanese airspace over `Alma al-Sha`b.

Between 2135 hours and 2315 hours, an enemy Israeli reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over Yarun and circled over the South. It then departed Lebanese airspace over Rumaysh.

On 21 June 2007, between 1100 hours and 1155 hours, two Israeli military aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over the sea off Juniyah and circled between Juniyah and Shikka as far as al-Harmal and Baalbek, Beirut and Shikka. They then departed Lebanese airspace over al-Naqurah.

Between 1105 hours and 1155 hours, four Israeli military aircraft violated Lebanese airspace over the sea off Tyre and circled over the South, the western Bekaa, Beirut, Shikka, al-Harmal and Baalbek. They then departed Lebanese airspace over the Shab`a farmlands.

Sea violations

On 20 June 2007 at 0839 hours, the Lebanese Navy observed three Israeli military launches 0.1 nautical miles (approximately 180 metres) north of the line of buoys at a distance of one mile off the coast. They returned south of that line at 0850 hours. (UNIFIL reports that there was no violation, and the issue is being followed up).

Acts of aggression in the field

On 18 June 2007, at 1100 hours, from their position at Ruwaysat al-`Alam inside the occupied Shab`a farmlands, enemy Israeli forces fired several rounds of medium-machine-gun fire in the direction of the area surrounding the position.

Israeli activities

On 17 June 2007 at 1740 hours, from their positions inside the occupied Shab`a farmlands, enemy Israeli forces fired four artillery shells that landed inside the farmlands across from Birkat al-Naqqar and al-Saddanah (outside Kafr Shuba). It was also reported that said forces went on alert and that helicopters were flown inside occupied Palestinian territory all along the Lebanese border.

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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the statement of the President of the Security Council of 31 October 2001 (S/PRST/2001/30), in which the Council requested me to submit reports at least every four months on the situation in Somalia. The report covers developments since my last report of 28 February 2007 (S/2007/115), and focuses, in particular, on the preparations for the national reconciliation congress, pursuant to the request contained in the Security Council presidential statement of 30 April 2007 (S/PRST/2007/13). It also includes an update on the security and human rights situation, and the humanitarian and development activities of the United Nations agencies and programmes for Somalia, as well as the status of contingency planning for a possible United Nations peacekeeping operation.

II. Main developments in Somalia

A. Preparations for the national reconciliation congress

2. In his address to the Transitional Federal Parliament on 1 March 2007, President Abdullahi Yusuf announced the convening of a national reconciliation congress. The congress will be held in Mogadishu and some 1,325 delegates from within the country and the diaspora are expected to attend, on the basis of the 4.5 clan power-sharing formula. The Transitional Federal Government also announced its intention to secure the capital and disarm the insurgents before the convening of the congress. The opening of the congress, initially scheduled for 16 April and postponed to 14 June 2007, has been postponed again until 15 July 2007, reportedly to allow more time to the Somali clans to choose delegates and to prepare the venue of the conference.

3. On 14 March, at a meeting in Nairobi, Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi presented the Government's road map for governance, national dialogue and reconciliation in Somalia, and announced the setting up of the National Governance and Reconciliation Committee, consisting of six eminent Somali personalities, to be chaired by former President Ali Mahdi Mohamed. The Committee was mandated to independently organize and manage the congress. The Transitional Federal Government also requested that an international advisory committee, comprising

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members of the international community and headed by my Special Representative, be established to assist the Committee by providing political, technical and financial support to the congress. The international advisory committee met with the Committee on 10 April and 26 May in Nairobi to discuss preparations for the congress.

4. President Yusuf underscored the independence of the National Governance and Reconciliation Committee as the sole authority mandated to run the affairs of the congress, including the management of its resources, in a letter dated 8 April 2007, addressed to Prime Minister Gedi and copied to the Speaker of the Transitional Federal Parliament, Sheikh Aden Mohammed Nor, as well as the Chairman of the Committee. Parliament adopted a resolution endorsing the convening of the congress, but stressed that all decisions of the "final reconciliation conference" should be in accordance with the Transitional Federal Charter. However, the resolution further stipulates that in the event of disputes or deadlock over the selection of delegates to the final reconciliation conference, the final arbiters shall be the members of Parliament from the areas concerned. The resolution also urges donors to speed up the process of providing the members of Parliament with the constituent visit allowance.

5. Many partners considered that the resolution was ambiguous since it did not make a distinction between the role of the Transitional Federal Parliament and that of the National Governance and Reconciliation Committee in the selection of the participants to the congress. My Special Representative addressed a letter to President Yusuf on behalf of the international advisory committee on 27 April, to seek clarification on the respective roles of Parliament and the Committee in the organization of the congress. In response, President Yusuf formally reiterated the independence of the Committee as the sole body charged with organizing and managing the congress.

6. During an official visit to Mogadishu on 10 May 2007, my Special Representative stressed to President Yusuf, Prime Minister Gedi and Transitional Federal Parliament Speaker Nor that it would be important for Parliament to recognize the independence of the National Governance and Reconciliation Committee by formally endorsing it. This would pave the way for the release, by the international community, of the funds needed to organize the congress. The three leaders agreed to convene a session of Parliament to address the issue. President Yusuf made it clear that the traditional leaders, acting under the auspices of the Committee, would be responsible for the selection of delegates to the congress. Parliament and the Committee would pool their efforts to help the traditional leaders in this process.

7. Throughout the reporting period, my Special Representative remained in contact with political leaders from all sides. He impressed upon all his interlocutors the need to engage in a true reconciliation process.

8. While the leaders of the former Union of Islamic Courts indicated their willingness to attend the meeting, they insisted that they would do so as a political entity. They also disagreed with the plan of the Transitional Federal Government to pacify Mogadishu through the forcible disarmament of armed groups. They further voiced their reservations on the choice of Mogadishu as the venue for the congress. The leaders of the Union of Islamic Courts have now linked their participation in the congress with the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces from Somalia. Subsequently, in a

press conference on 24 May, the leadership of the Union of Islamic Courts and former Parliament Speaker Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden announced that they will boycott the congress. The position of the Government is that all those who reject violence and accept the Government can participate in the congress as representatives of their respective clans.

9. The congress provides a useful opportunity to move the reconciliation process forward. However, the success of the congress hinges on ensuring that the process is owned and driven by Somalia, independently and objectively managed, and that it includes broad-based participation, including representatives of the diaspora. Adequate preparation and security arrangements are also critical for the success of the congress.

10. The congress should be seen as one step in a much broader reconciliation process and must seek to address fundamental issues relating to power-sharing and security, including the establishment of a comprehensive and verifiable ceasefire mechanism. The security situation in Mogadishu, which has so far been a major stumbling block on the path to peace, also has to be resolved by addressing the concerns of the discontented clans and of other interest groups, including the business community.

B. Situation in Mogadishu

11. Following Parliament's decision to relocate both the Cabinet and the Office of the President to Mogadishu, President Yusuf returned to the capital on 13 March 2007 from Baidoa, where the Transitional Federal Government had been based during the past year. Since then, the Government has been trying to secure the capital in preparation for the national reconciliation congress.

12. The Transitional Federal Government, with the support of Ethiopian forces, launched operations to disarm insurgents in Mogadishu on 21 March. However, this was met with stiff resistance from remnants of the Union of Islamic Courts and militiamen from the various subclans of Mogadishu's dominant Hawiye clan. Heavy fighting ensued and lasted until 27 April, when Government and Ethiopian troops captured insurgent strongholds in north Mogadishu. Heavy weapons were used and large numbers of casualties occurred as a result of the hostilities. The month-long fighting in Mogadishu was unusually fierce, also involving heavy weapons. The death toll numbered in the hundreds, including many civilians. Hundreds of thousands of residents were displaced and Mogadishu's few hospitals were overwhelmed with the injured, as were the hospitals in nearby towns. In late April, the Government claimed victory over the insurgents in Mogadishu and invited displaced residents to return, indicating that military operations had then ended. For the first time since their arrival in March, troops of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) began patrolling the streets of Mogadishu and provided medical assistance to those injured in the hostilities.

13. In a statement issued on 29 March 2007, I expressed concern about the intensification of fighting in Mogadishu, and urged all the parties to put an immediate end to the fighting and to honour the agreed cessation of hostilities. I also emphasized that sustainable peace in Somalia can be attained only through an inclusive dialogue leading to a political solution and national reconciliation. Throughout the fighting, the United Nations repeatedly expressed its concern at the

deteriorating humanitarian situation caused by the conflict in Mogadishu and urged all the parties to take all necessary measures to prevent needless human suffering.

14. The opposition leaders in exile — including leaders of the former Union of Islamic Courts, former Parliament Speaker Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden, and a group of former parliamentarians — and the then Transitional Federal Government Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Public Works, Hussein Aidid, held a series of meetings in Asmara, in which they severely criticized the military action of the Government and Ethiopian forces in Mogadishu, accusing them of committing war crimes. They claim that the insurgency has not been defeated and will continue the resistance.

15. After declaring victory, the Transitional Federal Government and its allies made efforts to consolidate their gains in Mogadishu. Consequently, on 28 April, Mohamed Omar Habeb "Mohamed Dhere" was appointed Governor and Mayor of Mogadishu, and Abdi Hassan Awale "Qeybdid" was appointed as the new Police Commissioner. Both are former warlords and leaders of the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism, which was defeated by the Union of Islamic Courts in Mogadishu in 2006. Both these officials have issued decrees banning arms, a move that has improved security in the capital. On 12 May, the Government sacked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Public Works, Hussein Aidid, and the Defence Minister, Barre Aden Shire "Hirale".

16. In the meantime, President Yusuf and Prime Minister Gedi have been engaged in a series of talks with leaders of some of the Hawiye subclans in an effort to reduce tension and promote reconciliation in Mogadishu. In compliance with Commissioner Qeybdid's orders for militias to hand over weapons, the members of the business community, long suspected of backing some of the armed groups, agreed to surrender their weapons. AMISOM troops were tasked with securing the arms. Furthermore, following the end of the fighting in Mogadishu, AMISOM troops started patrolling the streets of the capital city.

17. Since late April, Mogadishu and its outlying areas have witnessed recurrent attacks, including suicide attacks using vehicle-borne explosive devices, against Government troops and allied Ethiopian forces. There have also been mortar attacks against the Mogadishu airport, the main seaport and the presidential palace (Villa Somalia). Furthermore, there has been an upsurge in targeted assassinations, with the victims being for the most part supporters of the Government and prominent figures. The United Nations has also come under attack. On 20 March 2007, a United Nations convoy was attacked in an incident involving a roadside bomb and small arms some 30 km from Mogadishu. Three Somalis providing protection to United Nations staff were injured in the attack. The offices of the World Health Organization (WHO) in Mogadishu were attacked by armed gunmen, and one compound guard was shot and wounded on 16 May. On the same day, a roadside bomb killed four Ugandan troops and injured six others. Prime Minister Gedi survived two bomb attacks in less than a month, on 17 May and 3 June. The newly appointed Governor and Mayor of Mogadishu also survived a bomb attack against his convoy on 20 May. These and other recent events continue to raise concerns about security in Mogadishu.

C. Security situation elsewhere in Somalia

18. The main southern port city of Kismayo witnessed intra-clan tensions. Fighting broke out between rival militias from the Marehan and Mijerteen subclans of the Darod, resulting in at least 12 people being killed on 24 April. Tension continued for a number of days, resulting in the withdrawal from Kismayo of Mijerteen militias. However, the situation was eventually contained after a delegation of the Transitional Federal Government led by Minister of Interior Mohamed Mahamud Guled "Gama-Dheere" visited the city in early May.

19. Clashes erupted between "Puntland" and "Somaliland" forces on 9 April, over contending claims to the village of Dhahar in the disputed areas of eastern Sool and Sanaag regions. The incident, which resulted in one death, was the first of its kind this year, and raised dormant tensions over the disputed territories. In the light of these developments, my Special Representative, François Lonseny Fall, issued a press statement on 13 April appealing to both authorities to cease all hostilities and refrain from any form of provocative actions. He also visited "Puntland" and "Somaliland" from 12 to 14 May to help defuse the tension.

20. In addition, the continuing acts of banditry and the lawlessness in various parts of the country have raised serious concerns about the safety of humanitarian staff working in these areas. Two international staff members of Care International were abducted on 8 May while returning from a mission in "Puntland" and were released on 15 May. An armed group ambushed an international non-governmental organization (NGO) convoy in Buloburti on 11 May. The convoy was transporting food and other equipment for internally displaced persons from Mogadishu to Dhusamareb. A contractor hired by the international NGO was killed during the incident.

III. Activities of the United Nations and the international community

21. A United Nations technical assessment mission visited the region from 15 to 29 March. The objective of the mission was to report on the political and security situation in Somalia and the possible deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation; to provide recommendations for the United Nations further engagement in support of peace and security in Somalia and to make further recommendations on the stabilization and reconstruction of the country. The details of the mission report are addressed in my report to the Security Council dated 20 April 2007 (S/2007/204).

22. At a meeting on 1 April 2007 in Cairo, the International Contact Group on Somalia discussed, inter alia, recent developments in Somalia, the deployment of AMISOM, the implementation of resolution 1744 (2007), assistance to the national reconciliation congress, regional security and the threat of terrorism. The members also emphasized the paramount importance of establishing an inclusive and genuine political and reconciliation process.

23. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1744 (2007), and in accordance with the communiqué issued by the meeting of the International Contact Group in Cairo on 3 April, my Special Representative carried out consultations with various

partners with a view to exploring ways and means of creating a safe environment to facilitate dialogue and humanitarian access. He met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kenya, Raphael Tuju, Chairperson of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), on 27 April. He met successively with African Union (AU) Chairperson Konaré and Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles in Addis Ababa on 3 May. My Special Representative discussed security, political and humanitarian issues, including the deployment of AMISOM and the promotion of an all-inclusive political process.

24. My Special Representative chaired a meeting of the International Contact Group at the ambassadorial level in Nairobi on 4 May. The discussions focused on the humanitarian, political and security situations in Somalia and on how the Group could contribute to addressing the cessation of hostilities and the forthcoming national reconciliation congress. Following the meeting, he again travelled to Mogadishu on 10 May and conveyed the recommendations of the international community to President Yusuf and the Chairperson of the National Governance and Reconciliation Committee, Ali Mahdi, especially with regard to the independence and inclusiveness of the planned congress. He encouraged both leaders to continue the dialogue with the Hawiye elders in order to lower tensions in the city and improve the chances of reconciliation. My Special Representative also met with the AMISOM Force Commander.

25. At its summit held in Riyadh in March, the League of Arab States adopted a resolution in support of the Republic of Somalia. In the margins of the summit, an informal meeting was convened on 28 March by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia to discuss the way forward on Somalia. Ways to complete the AMISOM deployment and to promote inclusive national reconciliation in Somalia were considered at the meeting. Saudi Arabia also announced that it would offer its good offices to promote reconciliation among the Somali parties.

26. The twenty-sixth ordinary session of the IGAD Council of Ministers took place in Nairobi on 13 April. The Council assessed the security situation in Somalia, and called for the speeding up of the deployment process of AMISOM and expressed its support for the congress. However, Eritrea disassociated itself from the final communiqué, which expressed appreciation for Ethiopia's role in Somalia. Subsequently, on 22 April, Eritrea openly announced the temporary suspension of its IGAD membership. The Eritrean Government claimed that a number of repeated and irresponsible resolutions that undermine regional peace and security had been adopted under the guise of IGAD.

27. The International Contact Group met again in London on 6 and 7 June 2007. Members expressed concern over the continued sporadic violence in Mogadishu. They called on all parties to agree to an immediate cessation of hostilities and to protect civilians. The Group strongly condemned actions of extremists and terrorists and those looking to undermine the political and reconciliation process. It welcomed the assurances given by the Transitional Federal Government that the congress will be fully inclusive, and that no clan, subclan, or individual members thereof who renounce violence and are selected by their clans will be excluded from the reconciliation process. The Group concluded that the outcome of the congress should be fair and equitable representation in the transitional federal institutions. The Group promised to fund the congress, which should lead to a process of genuine political reconciliation. It offered its good offices in this regard. The Group also

agreed to continue to work with all parties to address the humanitarian needs of the Somali people and called on all parties to provide free and unhindered humanitarian access. The Group indicated that it looked forward to receiving plans for a United Nations peacekeeping mission.

28. On 5 June, I dispatched the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs to the Horn of Africa, accompanied by my Special Representative for Somalia, to consult with key national, regional and international players on how best the United Nations could assist on four main fronts: first, to facilitate an all-inclusive political process that could lead to reconciliation; second, to improve security by helping to generate international support for the full deployment of the African Union mission, AMISOM; third, to promote humanitarian and development assistance; and fourth, to address the regional dimensions of this conflict through strengthened regional security arrangements. In carrying out his mission, Under-Secretary-General Pascoe and his delegation attended a high-level meeting of the International Contact Group on Somalia, held in London on 6 June. In Nairobi, he met with the United Nations country team for Somalia, representatives of the diplomatic community and international NGOs working in Somalia. During a half-day visit to Mogadishu on 8 June, he met with President Yusuf, Prime Minister Gedi, and the Chairperson of the National Governance and Reconciliation Committee, Ali Mahdi. In Asmara, he held consultations with President Isaias Afwerki, and in Cairo he had discussions with the Egyptian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Amre Moussa. In Addis Ababa, Under-Secretary-General Pascoe met with the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, and the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Said Djinnit.

IV. Deployment of a peace support mission

29. During the period under review, AMISOM continued to face challenges. Thus far, only 1,700 Ugandan troops have been deployed. AU is still awaiting deployment of troop contributions promised by AU members. Although AMISOM did not participate in the fighting in Mogadishu, it came under attack on several occasions. A Ugandan soldier was killed and three were injured on 30 March, when Villa Somalia, which they were guarding, came under mortar fire. The soldier was the first Ugandan serving with AMISOM to die in Somalia. Subsequently, on 16 May, four Ugandan soldiers were killed in a roadside bomb attack and several others were injured. The latter were later evacuated to Nairobi. The Ugandan contingent, however, provided emergency medical assistance to the affected civilian population and to combatants of both sides.

30. Efforts are still under way to find logistical, technical and financial resources to expedite the full deployment of AMISOM. In this regard, the United Nations is considering ways of extending this support to AU. In response to an AU request to provide technical assistance in support of AMISOM, the United Nations is deploying a team of 10 military, police and civilian experts to AU headquarters to support its mission planning and management capacity structure.

31. A significant quantity of weaponry, including hand grenades, anti-tank mines, rocket-propelled grenade launchers and small arms, were confiscated on 9 May, and are being held and secured by AMISOM. The fact that no national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process has been initiated or planned and that there

are quantities of weapons, ammunitions and explosives still not under Government control is a serious problem that needs immediate attention.

32. Although the political and security situation on the ground remains unstable, a number of preparatory disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities have been initiated in order to create conditions for the launching of a national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process as soon as conditions permit. To this effect, a United Nations disarmament, demobilization and reintegration task force and a strategic framework for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration support have been established and endorsed by the United Nations country team for Somalia.

Contingency planning for a possible United Nations peacekeeping operation in Somalia

33. Further to the request contained in the Security Council presidential statement of 30 April (S/PRST/2007/13), I instructed the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to proceed with contingency planning for a possible United Nations peacekeeping operation in Somalia, should the Council decide to authorize such a mission. The subsequent planning effort has been based on observations and findings of the assessment mission that visited the region in March 2007, and lessons learned from the earlier experiences of the United Nations Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM I and II) from 1992 to 1995, as well as taking into account the history and practices of other United Nations peacekeeping operations elsewhere. I would like to emphasize the preliminary nature of the contingency planning. If the Council were to authorize a United Nations operation, a comprehensive technical assessment mission would be required. It should be recalled that the March assessment mission did not spend sufficient time on the ground in Somalia, owing to the volatile security situation, and did not comprise the range of military, police, logistics and other specialists required to gather details necessary to engage at a deeper level of planning.

34. It is clear, however, that even in the best case scenario, addressing the problems of Somalia will be a demanding, dangerous and massive undertaking. During the years without a functioning government, the country suffered tremendous destruction and neglect. In addition to the physical damage, the foundations and institutions of the society have been almost completely destroyed. Bringing about serious change in Somalia will require considerable, long-term and sustained commitment and effort on the part of the international community and, most important, the Somalis themselves. All concerned must be prepared to invest the necessary resources and commit to such a long-term process. It must be recalled, in this context, that while peacekeeping can help create the conditions for other activities, it is but one element of the required concerted effort.

35. In view of the enormous needs of Somalia, a United Nations peacekeeping operation would have to be multidimensional. In addition to contributing to the security and stability of the country, the mission would support the transitional process, in complement to the ongoing initiatives of the United Nations agencies, including through massive reconstruction and development; urgent recovery efforts; and the rehabilitation and capacity-building of national institutions. The geographical focus of a United Nations mission would be south-central Somalia, in

particular the population centres along the Shabelle and Juba rivers. Mogadishu would require special attention, as the country's capital and the heart of political contention and devastating hostilities. Such a mission would also need to monitor the potential for rising tensions in other areas.

36. A United Nations mission would likely face a number of major threats, predominantly by radical groups that are less influenced by warlords and some clan leaders who are believed to be opposed to any normalization and the presence of peacekeeping troops. In addition, there are an estimated 50,000 to 70,000 clan militia and other armed groups operating in Somalia that are generally under clan control. However, these disparate militias can pose a threat to peacekeepers, evoking a rapid transition into a serious security situation. The military component of a United Nations mission would therefore need a strong mandate and all capabilities to defend against such situations and to achieve deterrence through strength in its area of operations. It would also have to be sufficiently robust to provide protection to vulnerable civilians within its areas of deployment and to expand areas of stability to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid.

37. In the best case scenario, United Nations peacekeepers would need to secure the seaports and airports required by the operation, as well as land and sea supply lines. As the mission is deployed, military tasks would include patrolling to support the establishment and maintenance of a stable and secure environment; monitoring the provisions of any ceasefire agreement; contributing to a Somali-owned disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme building on current activities by United Nations agencies by receiving, securing or disposing of heavy weapons and munitions and securing resources for demobilization and reintegration; monitoring the withdrawal of external forces; contributing to preventing the illicit flow of weapons and material into Somalia within areas of deployment; and protecting United Nations personnel, assets and installations.

38. I would like to emphasize that the plans outlined in this section are based on the assumption that certain conditions would be in place on the ground, providing for an environment conducive to peacekeeping. In other words, the scenario would be one in which hostilities would have largely ceased and all major armed groups would have signed an agreement that would allow for external monitoring. The security situation throughout south-central Somalia would be fairly stable. Accordingly, the disarmament of the militias would be voluntary, and the reconciliation process would be inclusive and ongoing. While the presence of spoiler elements and opposition to peacekeeping troops could not be ruled out, a United Nations operation would have to be broadly accepted by all clans and subclans, preferably expressed in a cessation of hostilities or ceasefire agreement or declaration. In addition, the feasibility of a United Nations operation would depend largely on the availability of capable troops and police contributors and extensive programmes of reconstruction of the country. A deployment by the United Nations would also have to be linked to a phased withdrawal from Somalia by Ethiopia.

39. The initial assessment suggests that a large, very robust and mobile military force would be required. With headquarters in Mogadishu, it would consist of a number of brigade-sized sectors in south-central Somalia, supported by significant military aviation, including attack helicopters, and considerable military engineering, logistics and transport units. Given the continuing scourge of pirates off the coast of Somalia and the extensive flow of weapons into the country, a strong

maritime component would be required to protect supply shipping and carry out patrols in support of the arms embargo. United Nations military liaison officers would likely need to be deployed in several locations: to "Somaliland" and "Puntland" to maintain close liaison with the United Nations police that would also form part of the mission and other United Nations offices; to AU to facilitate a transition from AMISOM; and to Kenya and Ethiopia to maintain liaison with the military authorities in those countries. The force would require a reserve of one mechanized battalion. Furthermore, provision would need to be made for a rapidly deployable capacity, over the horizon, to be activated in extremis, if the peace process were to unravel during the generation and deployment of the force. The total force would consist of up to 15 infantry battalions, excluding the over horizon capacity. With support elements the force could comprise over 20,000 military personnel. The extreme violence affecting Somalia would require special security measures to be used by the mission.

40. Institution-building is vital to the functioning of the Transitional Federal Government. This presents serious challenges to the current transitional federal institutions, which are weak and unable to address various governance issues ranging from the establishment of basic administrative structures at district and regional levels to fundamental issues such as the rule of law, transitional justice and human rights. The mission would need to design a comprehensive programme that could help the transitional federal institutions enhance their capacities to deliver what the Somali people need in their daily lives.

41. Working in close partnership with stakeholders, a police component would assist in reviving the Somalia Police Force, which has been seriously incapacitated but not totally disbanded. The objective would be to help it reach an acceptable international policing standard by conducting training in skills at designated locations, mainly in south-central Somalia, during and shortly after the transition period. In this connection, a key task of the police component would be to provide advice and support for police reform and restructuring, including vetting, selection, recruitment and certification processes, as well as skills and executive training. In addition, the police component of the mission would provide direct security support to the Somalia Police Force and other law enforcement agencies through the development of formed police units. The development of such units would also be critical for the protection of United Nations personnel and facilities in cases of public disorder. The number of police personnel required to carry out these tasks would be determined by a future in-depth assessment to be conducted by the newly established standing police capacity in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. In addition, substantial funds, channelled through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), would be required to carry out these endeavours.

42. The mission would also require a sizeable and comprehensive civilian component that would focus on supporting the transitional process, including human rights, the protection of civilians and justice, and reconstruction and development efforts. To this end, substantive components would include political and civil affairs, public information, humanitarian affairs, human rights, gender, the rule of law and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Nonetheless, defining the parameters of the mission's civilian component would need to be closely coordinated with that of other United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations to harmonize efforts. Lessons learned from other integrated missions would be helpful for setting up integrated structures.

43. As mentioned in my last report on Somalia, a United Nations peacekeeping operation would face very significant logistical challenges, primarily due to the likelihood of security threats and the poor state of the infrastructure. Special protection measures may have to be taken to ensure the uninterrupted supply of goods and services to the mission. In addition, the main area of operations, to the south between the Shabelle and Juba rivers, is prone to frequent flooding during the periods from April to June and October to December, making surface movement extremely difficult and hazardous. As a result, a United Nations operation would be heavily dependent on maritime and air assets for its deployment and supply lines.

44. It should be noted that as a result of these conditions, it may be extremely difficult to attract international staff and contractors to deploy to Somalia without adequate financial incentives. As a consequence, until such time that the military component is able to stabilize and improve the security situation, the number of civilians in the mission area should be kept to a minimum to minimize risk and exposure. Insertion of civilians into the mission area would have to be controlled and would require careful planning. Most likely, all personnel would have to be provided with secure accommodation and prepared meals for the first six months after mission start-up.

45. In view of the long absence of a functioning central government, all commercial activity, much of which is illegal, has been taken over by warlords, militias and businessmen, operating without regulation and accompanied by armed elements. The continued state of lawlessness makes the movement of goods and services across the country extremely difficult, complex and costly. For its sustenance, the local population depends heavily on imported goods and services, which are expensive and at present barely sufficient to meet local demand. While dependence on local sources and contractors would make a United Nations operation vulnerable to complex clan and subclan structures, international contractors could also become targets of these groups. Despite an abundance of skilled and unskilled manpower in the country, recruitment of national staff by the United Nations could pose challenges in balancing employment between the various clans.

46. Due to years of destruction and neglect, infrastructure in Somalia is almost non-existent, and its rehabilitation will require major and long-term efforts. The country is characterized by almost entirely degraded roads, bridges, ports and airfields, as well as a lack of power, transportation, communications and health facilities. A United Nations operation would have to invest significantly in improving a number of key installations, especially seaports and airports, and may have to depend heavily on the use of military enabling units for a considerable period after the initial start-up. Over time, the concept of mission support would be based on the integration of United Nations-owned, military, police and contracted logistics resources.

47. The preliminary planning effort so far suggests that the mission would be best served by an extensive United Nations facility outside Somalia, in the form of a logistics base in Mombasa, Kenya, in order to ensure an uninterrupted supply of materials and services. The main supply line would be the coastal maritime route from Mombasa to Kismayo, Mogadishu and Hobyo, which would serve as secondary logistics bases in Somalia. From these bases, forward air links would be established to all deployment locations in the interior, with land routes being used

where feasible in terms of security and infrastructure. To the extent possible and subject to the concurrence of other United Nations agencies, the mission's support services and resources would be coordinated, for reasons of security and cost-effectiveness, by establishing a local liaison mechanism at the regional or country level.

V. Humanitarian situation

48. The escalation of violence in Mogadishu between February and late April resulted in the displacement of some 400,000 people from Mogadishu towards south-central regions of Somalia and as far as Galgaduud and Mudug. That is estimated to be one third of the city population, and it is the largest new population displacement anywhere in the world this year. As they moved, internally displaced persons suffered threats, intimidation, looting and rape. Urban internally displaced persons in Mogadishu were also affected by the fighting. The proximity of internally displaced person sites to buildings targeted by mortar attacks led to loss of life and the wounding of civilians. According to WHO, between 1 March and mid-May, an estimated 2,000 war-wounded were admitted to Mogadishu's main hospitals.

49. For several weeks, humanitarian efforts to assist the new wave of displacement were severely hampered by prevailing insecurity, the presence of illegal checkpoints, and harassment of humanitarian staff by free roaming militia. Administrative restrictions imposed by the Transitional Federal Government requesting inspection of aid supplies prior to distribution and limiting access to strategic airstrips to reach internally displaced person locations resulted in thousands of displaced living without any assistance for weeks, in the rough open areas around Mogadishu with no adequate food, shelter or access to clean water and sanitation.

50. At a meeting between the Transitional Federal Government and United Nations officials in Baidoa on 23 April, authorities gave reassurances that they would support the provision of humanitarian assistance and facilitate humanitarian access. An interministerial committee has been established and the Minister for Health has been designated focal point for the coordination of the humanitarian response.

51. The onset of the Gu rains in late April created additional obstacles to access populations in need. A World Food Programme (WFP) convoy carrying 1,176 metric tons of food to Afmadow and Hagar was stuck in mud for over two weeks. An upsurge in piracy off the Somali coast posed additional challenges to the provision of aid as WFP-chartered vessels came under attack in mid-May.

52. The current lull in the hostilities and increased collaboration of the Transitional Federal Government have resulted in a slight improvement in humanitarian access. To date, some 366,000 people have been assisted with food and non-food supplies in Afgoye, Merka, Mudug and Galgaduud.

53. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as of mid-May some 90,000 people had returned to Mogadishu. However, specific protection concerns have arisen as returnees have reportedly been prevented from returning to their homes. Tension is also rising over the fate of some public buildings that until recently were occupied by urban

internally displaced persons and are now being claimed by the Transitional Federal Government without providing the internally displaced persons with an alternative durable solution for their resettlement.

54. In the health sector, the outbreak of acute watery diarrhoea/cholera in south-central Somalia remained a major health concern. From 1 January to 11 May, 30,227 cases of acute watery diarrhoea were confirmed, with 973 related deaths. A multiagency response has been implemented with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and NGO partners supporting chlorination of water sources, the construction of latrines, and education in health and hygiene at internally displaced person sites.

55. A critical nutrition situation persists in parts of south-central Somalia, despite the improvement in food security conditions reported earlier this year. More than 8,500 malnourished children received life-saving support at 114 UNICEF-supported supplemental, therapeutic and community-based feeding programmes throughout the central and southern zone. An additional 16,200 children under five receive blanket supplemental feeding each month in the Gedo region. The number of selective feeding sites in central and south Somalia increased from 14 to 75 during 2006 and thus far in 2007, an additional 39 sites have become operational. In order to improve the food security situation, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) distributed emergency kits of agricultural tools and seeds to approximately 20,000 farmers in the Middle and Lower Shabelle and Lower Juba regions. FAO also carried out critical emergency interventions in the livestock sector, enhancing livestock disease surveillance and capability for the rapid containment of disease outbreaks and emergency treatment of affected livestock.

56. The Government of Kenya continues to close its border with Somalia to asylum-seekers. Some Somalis have nonetheless succeeded in the first months of 2007 to reach the Dadaab refugee camps and request asylum. Kenyan authorities have agreed to their registration on the condition that asylum-seekers be transferred to the Kakuma refugee camp in north-western Kenya.

57. The United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator travelled to Mogadishu on 12 May, becoming the highest ranking United Nations official to have visited the city since the early 1990s. Although the visit was curtailed by explosions of roadside bombs along the mission's planned route, the Emergency Relief Coordinator met with the Transitional Federal Government President and Prime Minister, as well as with civil society representatives. The Emergency Relief Coordinator urged all parties in Somalia to provide full support for unhindered humanitarian access and stressed the need for the authorities to facilitate humanitarian access, including communicating the necessary instructions to militia and military actors at checkpoints. The Emergency Relief Coordinator expressed grave concern over the reported perpetration by all sides to the conflict of human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law and strongly condemned such acts. The Transitional Federal Government denied involvement in these abuses and agreed to a visit by the High Commissioner for Human Rights to look into the allegations. Following the visit of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, efforts are continuing to scale up the response to internally displaced persons and to increase cooperation with the Transitional Federal Government, particularly on how best to assist internally displaced persons returning to Mogadishu.

58. The revised 2007 consolidated appeals process (CAP) for Somalia was launched in April, seeking $262 million, up from the original $237 million requested in December 2006. As of 22 May, the 2007 CAP is 42 per cent funded. As with past appeals, most funding has gone to the food sector (101 per cent covered), while other key sectors, such as health (6 per cent), protection (9 per cent), shelter (22 per cent), agriculture (8 per cent), education (0 per cent), and water and sanitation (20 per cent), remain severely underfunded. Following the visit of the Emergency Relief Coordinator to Somalia in May, it was decided that financial support from the Central Emergency Response Fund will be continued for Somalia. To that effect, an allocation of $2.7 million has been approved to support projects of UNICEF and UNHCR, targeting 180,000 and 90,000 new internally displaced persons, respectively. The projects will provide shelter and non-food items and support for basic services infrastructure. An additional $2.9 million was approved to support WFP air services for airlifting relief supplies.

VI. Human rights and protection

59. For the past 16 years the human rights situation in Somalia has been a cause for serious concern. Within the past six months, a number of new developments have emerged and the existing dire human rights situation appears to have worsened.

60. During the reporting period, there were reports of extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention and forced disappearances. In addition, threats to the media and human rights defenders remained serious issues of concern. Unresolved land and property rights issues, which are often the root causes of clan-based conflicts, remained also unaddressed.

61. Detailed information on, and verification of, allegations of human rights violations remain difficult to obtain owing to the prevailing security situation, in particular in southern and central Somalia, and to the lack of expertise of independent human rights defenders conducting fact-finding missions in the country.

62. Allegations have been made that serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law took place during the past few months of serious fighting. Non-military targets, such as hospitals and schools, have been attacked. It was also reported that some of the wounded were prevented from receiving medical treatment and protection and that urgent deliveries of food aid were hampered or blocked. While there is no independent and official account, local human rights organizations based in Mogadishu report that over 1,000 civilians were killed in this period, several thousand people were injured and 60 per cent of the dead and wounded were elderly, women and children. A joint statement made on 27 April by 12 mandate-holders expressing deep concern at the latest round of fierce fighting in Mogadishu was welcomed by many local actors and drew the attention of the media and the international community to human rights and humanitarian issues.

63. Discrimination and abuse of marginalized groups and minorities also appeared to continue unabated. Sexual and gender-based violence and exploitation of women and girls were also reported. Recruitment of child soldiers, as indicated in the recent report of the Secretary-General on children in armed conflict in Somalia (S/2007/259), persists throughout the country.

64. On 3 May, the Transitional Federal Parliament enacted an anti-terrorism bill introduced by the Transitional Federal Government three months earlier, which provides, inter alia, for the freezing of property of those suspected of carrying out terrorist acts. It also provides for the death penalty for those convicted of participating in the establishment of a terrorist organization and those carrying out or attempting to carry out terrorist acts. The law raises serious concerns about its direct implications on basic freedom. Close monitoring of its application will be required.

65. The National Union of Somali Journalists and Reporters sans frontières reported that several journalists were killed or injured as a direct consequence of the conflict in Mogadishu. During the reporting period, shells hit the television and other radio stations in the capital. In "Puntland" and "Somaliland", cases of harassment towards journalists continue to be reported.

66. The British NGO, Article 19, expressed its concerns regarding a draft Government law on the media on 14 May. According to Article 19, the draft law would seriously affect freedom of expression, which is already jeopardized, as it would require that every media outlet be registered and would demand newspapers to vet their publications with Government authorities.

67. Human smuggling from Somalia to Yemen remains a major concern. UNHCR reports that since the beginning of 2007, 7,144 people crossed the Gulf of Aden through a perilous journey that ultimately led to the death of at least 380 people. During his recent visit to "Puntland", my Special Representative raised this concern with the authorities, who assured him that proper steps were taken to address the smuggling problem.

68. In the absence of judicial mechanisms, such as law enforcement, for the protection of human rights defenders, Somali human rights organizations continue to operate in a context of total insecurity and fear. The High Commissioner for Human Rights condemned the assassination of Isse Abdi, the Chairman of Kisima, a Somali human rights organization, in Mogadishu on 14 March. She urged the Government to conduct a prompt and impartial investigation into this case.

VII. Operational activities to promote peace

69. The United Nations country team has continued to implement activities that address key recovery and development needs throughout Somalia, particularly in south-central Somalia, in line with the priorities identified by the United Nations system for the next six months in support of stabilization. The United Nations country team has recently completed the United Nations transition plan 2008-2009, which lays out the United Nations planned contribution to recovery, reconstruction and development in Somalia over the next two years, in accordance with the Somali Reconstruction and Development Framework.

A. Reconciliation and peace initiatives

70. During the reporting period, support was provided by UNDP to the National Governance and Reconciliation Committee to help ensure that the national

reconciliation congress is conducted in a secure and transparent atmosphere with broad-based inclusive Somali ownership of the process.

71. The district-based peacebuilding project made significant progress throughout the Bay and Bakol regions. UNDP and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), in partnership with the Ministry of Interior, have begun training the newly selected councils of the Bay region. In addition, support has been provided to the councils through the physical rehabilitation of district and regional offices, the provision of basic furniture and the implementation of community projects, with additional support from the International Labour Organization.

B. Health

72. For the first time in Somalia, a household survey of maternal mortality was conducted. Preliminary results show a significant decline in the estimated child and infant mortality rates, down from 224 and 133 per 1,000 live births, respectively, for the period 1996-1999, to 156 and 96 per 1,000 live births, respectively, for 2003-2006. Data also shows evidence of a peace dividend for the northern zones, where the decline in the mortality rate has been much more significant. In-depth analysis of the results has led to the development of a joint UNICEF/WHO accelerated child survival programme for 2007-2009.

73. Since January, 103,000 long-lasting insecticide-treated nets, benefiting over 50,000 families, have been provided in the central and southern zone, targeting children under five and pregnant women. An additional 45,000 nets are being sent to Mogadishu to benefit about 22,500 households. UNICEF has supplied 100 maternal and child health facilities and 15 hospitals throughout Somalia with highly effective anti-malaria treatment and rapid diagnostic tests.

74. From January to March, over 100,000 children were vaccinated against measles in several districts of the central and southern zone that had poor coverage or were inaccessible during the nationwide measles campaign in 2006 due to the deteriorating security situation late in the year. This brings the total number of children vaccinated in the zone to 1.9 million. Since January 2007, seven cases of wild polio virus have been reported in Somalia, five in the Togodher region in "Somaliland" and two recent cases in the central and southern zone.

75. A reproductive health skills assessment was undertaken with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in 23 maternal and child health clinics and two hospitals in south-central Somalia. Basic reproductive health kits were provided to maternal and child health centres, and advanced reproductive health supplies for safe deliveries to referral hospitals in south-central Somalia, including in Mogadishu and Galkayo.

C. Education

76. The "Back to school" campaign in flood-affected areas successfully brought more than 35,000 children back to the classroom in early 2007. All flood-affected schools in the Middle and Lower Shabelle, Lower and Middle Juba and Hiran regions were reopened in January. As an estimated 40,000 school children have been displaced from the Mogadishu area, United Nations agencies have been working

with partners, internally displaced person community leaders and education authorities to register the children in their new locations, set up emergency classroom tents and mobilize displaced teachers to resume basic education activities until the end of the school year in May. More than 20 temporary school tents have been set up to cater for children in internally displaced person communities in the Jowhar and Merka areas, and 100 additional school tents will be erected in conflict- and flood-affected communities.

77. A permanent nine-classroom girls' primary school was opened in Baidoa with UNICEF support, and by February nearly 600 girls between six and 14 years of age had registered. Construction is under way in "Puntland" of six schools with water and sanitation facilities, including a "peace" school in Galkayo, which will bring together children from areas both north and south of the "green line".

D. Livelihoods and food security

78. Support is being provided to 30,000 pastoralists, 10,000 small-scale fishermen and 5,000 farming households by FAO in the riverine and peri-riverine areas of Shabelle valley. This is being done through technical assistance, training, equipment, pharmaceuticals, support to veterinary teams, vaccination campaigns and the distribution of emergency kits of fishing gears. As the vast majority of Somalis continue to depend on agricultural, livestock production and related activities, FAO is providing longer-term support in natural resource management in "Somaliland", "Puntland" and south-central Somalia.

79. In response to the recent exodus of internally displaced persons from Mogadishu in March and April 2007, FAO and partner organizations have provided, through a series of targeted and phased operations, support in the recovery of viable livelihoods to at least 30,000 farming or pastoralist households that have returned to small settlements in their rural areas of origin in southern Somalia. FAO-supported information systems continue to provide the most comprehensive and structured information on livelihoods, nutrition and natural resources.

E. Area-based support for vulnerable groups (internally displaced persons in particular)

80. The first two phases of the housing projects for internally displaced persons and returnees in Hargeisa and Garowe are nearing completion. The UNICEF/UN-Habitat post-tsunami reconstruction programme in Xaafuun is also in its final stage. An entire new village has arisen on the Xaafuun peninsula with adequate housing and services, at a safer new location. In Bosasso, the lottery for the internally displaced person resettlement project took place in April. The inter-agency project is implemented by the shelter cluster, comprising UNHCR, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UN-Habitat, the Danish Refugee Council and other organizations.

F. Security and rule of law

81. In February, a peace and security conference in Mogadishu brought together over 250 participants representing all major stakeholders, including religious and traditional leaders, clan elders, representatives from civil society and women's organizations, and political and academic experts. The result of the conference was a set of recommendations to strengthen security in Mogadishu, including initial discussion on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and weapons control.

82. UNDP supported a six-week training-of-trainers programme at the Armo Police Training Academy. The objective of the training programme was twofold: to increase the number of qualified police trainers, and to strengthen the capacity of current trainers. Training is also taking place at the Labatinjirow Police Training Centre near Baidoa.

83. UNDP, in consultation with the Somalia Police Force, has identified 1,500 recruits for training at Armo and Labatinjirow. The selection of recruits was based on clan balance and regional representation. The programme commenced in May 2007 for a 12-week period. Deployment of the trained recruits will be based on the Somalia Police Force strategic development plan. A subsequent training programme for additional 1,500 recruits will take place in September 2007.

84. The Supreme Court in south-central Somalia is being reactivated, with support from the United Nations in the provision of essential equipment for regional and district courts and the training of court staff and law professionals.

85. In April 2007, police advisory committees were created in Mogadishu to monitor the eight police stations. The committees underwent intensive training in May, based on the international standards of human rights.

G. Child protection

86. More than 100 cases of children separated from their families have been identified for follow-up since December 2006 in the central and southern zone in the context of NGO-led rapid assessments. Child rights violations by all parties are regularly monitored and reported. These reports are contained in the Secretary-General's annual report to the Security Council on children and armed conflict, which was submitted to the Council's working group on children and armed conflict on 10 May 2007, in accordance with resolution 1612 (2005). High-level advocacy against the recruitment and use of child soldiers has been ongoing. The issue of child soldiers will be addressed as part of the United Nations task force on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Reports of violations of children's rights are used to define programmatic responses and to ensure that individual victims have access to support services. UNICEF, in partnership with Save the Children UK, has been providing predeployment trainings in child and civilian protection to AMISOM forces at both officer and rank-and-file levels. UNICEF is also planning to support AMISOM by providing child protection advisers.

87. In the disputed region of Sanaag, a child protection network has been launched, and programmes are being implemented to respond to reports of widespread gender-based violence in internally displaced person settings in the

newly accessible areas of Galkayo. Options for advocacy against female genital mutilation in Somalia are being considered.

H. Governance and public administration

88. Several hundred women in the Gedo region received training to enable them to play an active role in the reconciliation processes and the formation of a local governance structure. In parallel, the Transitional Federal Government has prepared a decree on the political inclusion of women, which sets a 30 per cent rate of participation in all national and local institutions.

89. Support has been provided to the newly established National Civil Service Commission in preparing procedures for civil service recruitment and the compilation of baseline information of the existing employees and volunteers of the Transitional Federal Institutions.

90. UNDP and the World Bank conducted a joint mission to "Somaliland" to assist in the development of a joint action plan to support efforts of "Somaliland" to reform and improve the public financial management systems. UNFPA and the Ministry of Planning in "Somaliland" organized a conference on statistical and data management capacity-building needs. Participants from Government authorities, civil society and United Nations agencies attended that conference. The capacity of the Ministry of Planning was strengthened through the deployment of two statistical advisers.

I. HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence

91. As massive displacement in the central and southern zone increases the risk of spreading HIV, the "Woman-to-woman" initiative has benefited over 1,000 girls and 3,150 women in six regions through peer education or outreach activities. UNICEF also targeted 60 leaders among vulnerable populations in the central and southern zone, particularly within internally displaced person communities, through awareness and prevention sessions. HIV leadership advocacy forums trained more than 240 elders in various towns in "Somaliland" with key information to pass on to their communities. Community-based NGOs in "Somaliland" and "Puntland" are being trained to provide peer counselling and capacity-building to people affected by or living with HIV. In "Somaliland" this included the production of the first newsletter by people living with or affected by HIV. The Ministry of Youth and Sports, supported by UNFPA, initiated a national youth situational analysis, including a knowledge, attitude, behaviour and practice survey in "Somaliland" and "Puntland". A programme of training of trainers in peer education, for 25 young girls and boys, was organized by UNFPA in Bossaso, "Puntland". UNFPA organized two training sessions on the role of journalists in the fight against sexual and gender-based violence for 34 journalists at the University in Bossasso.

92. Within the context of the United Nations transition plan 2008-2009, the United Nations country team has agreed on a two-year joint work plan to implement HIV cross-cutting issues. The main thrust of the joint work plan is to generate strategic information and data on the drivers of the epidemic.

93. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria continues to exceed the pre-determined goals, including by providing one million Somalis with access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support services in "Puntland", "Somaliland" and south-central Somalia. By the end of May, the national Somali HIV response mechanism had four functional antiretroviral therapy sites, seven voluntary counselling and testing centres, seven sexually transmitted infection centres, 28 blood safety centres, six laboratories, seven youth centres, one tuberculosis/HIV centre and 34 media outreach programmes. This is major progress over what existed a year ago. To support the delivery of such services, close to 5,000 Somalis have been trained in integrated prevention, treatment, care and support.

94. UNFPA and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) jointly sponsored three technical advisers in all three zones of Somalia, to assist the Ministry of Health and the national AIDS commissions in their work on reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and youth issues. UNFPA, together with the Ministry of Health and the national AIDS commissions, initiated the development of a national condom programming strategy.

VIII. Observations

95. While the current situation may provide a good opportunity for the Transitional Federal Government to create conditions for sustainable peace and reconciliation in Somalia, concerns remain regarding the security of the venue of the national reconciliation congress, its independence and inclusiveness and its expected outcome.

96. A genuine and all-inclusive dialogue and political process is the only way to achieve sustainable peace in Somalia. I encourage the National Governance and Reconciliation Committee to make the Congress as inclusive and transparent as possible and to engage with all the key stakeholders, including clan elders, religious leaders, the business community, women's groups and other representatives of civil society. This would facilitate the support of the international community for the congress. The congress should therefore address critical political and security issues, including a comprehensive ceasefire and an agreed framework for disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating Somalia's militias, consistent with the National Security and Stabilization Plan, the constitutional process and preparation for national elections. The outcome of the congress should aim to achieve a comprehensive political settlement and develop a road map for the remainder of the transitional period.

97. The congress is an important landmark in the reconciliation process in Somalia. However, for this process to be truly genuine and all-inclusive, it requires political will on the part of all the parties to constructively engage in this process. The Transitional Federal Government must show its commitment by reaching out to all the dissident and opposition groups in this regard. President Yusuf's engagement with the Hawiye leaders in Mogadishu is a good beginning. However, this dialogue has to be sustained to conclude successfully. At the same time, all opposition groups inside Somalia as well as those in exile, including Union of Islamic Courts leaders and former parliamentarians must renounce violence and extremism, and pledge to effectively engage in dialogue with the Transitional Federal Government that is

aimed at achieving a sustainable political settlement in Somalia. Legitimate concerns about potential acts of terrorism in the Horn of Africa should not limit the promotion of a politics of inclusiveness in Somalia. While a significant number of spoilers remain active in Somalia, they must not be allowed to derail the political process.

98. I condemn all acts of violence in Somalia, including the killing of AMISOM soldiers, and call on all parties to cease hostilities and engage in peace efforts. I commend the efforts of all international partners engaged on their untiring efforts to help the Somali parties reach a comprehensive agreement. My message to the Transitional Federal Government is to extend dialogue to all parties and call on the disaffected groups to cease violence and join the political process.

99. There is an urgent need to strengthen AMISOM capabilities on the ground, including the expedited completion of its full deployment, to help create conditions conducive for dialogue and reconciliation and to facilitate the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces. I urge AU member States that have pledged to send troops to Somalia to do so without further delay. I also appeal to the international community to assist AU with the necessary logistical and financial resources for the deployment of AMISOM. I reiterate my satisfaction over the expressed intention of Ethiopia to withdraw its forces. I call on all States in the region to respect Somalia's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

100. At present, the conditions outlined in paragraph 38 exist only in part or not at all. A United Nations operation will only succeed if it is deployed in support of a political process, not as a substitution for one. Therefore, the immediate focus of the international community should be on promoting a ceasefire arrangement and a viable and inclusive political process, which in turn would bring about a sufficiently stable environment in which peacekeepers could play a useful role. In the absence of the necessary conditions, not only would a peacekeeping operation be more likely to fail in its objectives and possibly be exposed to a number of security threats, but the Organization would likely find it very difficult to generate the number of troops and other personnel required for an operation of the size envisaged for Somalia. As mentioned in my previous report, if the conditions for peacekeeping are not in place, the Security Council and the wider international community may want to consider alternative options.

101. In the meantime, the United Nations will continue its efforts to address the serious humanitarian needs in the country. I encourage the international community to continue to generously support humanitarian relief efforts in Somalia. I call on all parties to provide unhindered access to relief efforts and to comply with international humanitarian law and human rights principles.

102. Independent verification of allegations of serious and gross violations of human rights and humanitarian law would be an important step to establish confidence in the political process. With a view to the limited capacity of local human rights actors in Somalia, a joint mission of independent mandate holders could be a possible option to gather facts about alleged human rights and humanitarian abuses committed during the recent outbreaks of fighting in Mogadishu and south and central Somalia. It would also allow for direct dialogue on human rights and accountability with the Transitional Federal Institutions and other stakeholders, as well as public advocacy on sensitive human rights issues.

103. Recent developments in Somalia amply demonstrate the degree to which national and regional security conditions are intertwined in the Horn of Africa. Long-term security for Somalia will not be possible without addressing the regional aspects of the crisis. In this regard, I reiterate the need to explore measures to deal with the regional dimension of the Somali crisis and to find ways to address the security concerns of Somalia and its neighbours, including the reinforcement of the existing regional security architecture.

104. Finally, I wish to reaffirm my deep appreciation to my Special Representative for Somalia for his leadership and continued efforts to foster inclusive dialogue and reconciliation among the Somali people. I call upon all Somali parties and Member States to continue to give him their fullest support and cooperation in pursuit of this goal.